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**Theological Life in Hungarian Theological Journals in
the 1940ies**

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The years between the two World Wars brought developments for the Lutheran Church in Hungary in many aspects.

1 The signs of a general upturn of Church life have certain connecting points and interactions, but they should be distinguished from another process: **The interwar period was characterized by an upswing in theological reflection, which peaked in the 1940ies.** It was reflected in the way, how the need for an increasingly intensive effect of theology on Church life, pastoral service and – specifically – preaching was brought up more and more frequently. It appeared in the endeavour of ministers to obtain scientific degrees. It was reflected in newly launched theological journals and how the number of pages of pastoral magazines became larger. The Luther-renaissance, the theology of Karl Barth and the spiritual revival, as well, formed church life and the attitude of Evangelical Christians towards the way of the reformers.

2 In my opinion, the **proliferating theological conflicts, the open criticism and the proposed reforms** reinforced the idea that the era was quite lively from the point of theological reflections. A part of this boom was the tendency of many, who condemned the history of theology convicting the ways of

thinking of decades or centuries. Many studies reflected a sense of strain that went beyond the rat race of generations, and while they overlapped differences between age groups, they appeared to be basically theological. The tension appeared in the sharply different approaches of criticisms against preaches and sermons, in the area of liturgical reform, in the statements about spiritual revival and especially in the debate about the immortality of the soul. In my opinion, the sharp theological disagreements did not lead to final divisions.

3 This is not precluded by the observation that **two major groups may be outlined within the theological approaches of the age: the Győr Circle and the Budapest Circle.** Most Lutheran press products of national importance were established in and controlled from the Transdanubian part of the country and dominated by individuals, who lived there. Through periodicals like *Harangszó* (Chimes) or *Lelkipásztor* (The Pastor), other Dioceses became also thematized through the Home Mission Project and ministers, who worked in close relationship with the Transdanubian Bishop, Béla Kapi. I see connection between the division of the of the two groups started in the first half of the 1940ies and the separation of the tendencies in church politics in the 1940ies. The fact that this line of Bishop Lajos Ordass was

supported openly by ministers of the Bányai Diocese was not attributable to the general loyalty to their own Bishop only, but, even if indirectly, the close relationship of their previous Bishop, Sándor Raffay, with the political elite that ruled public life between the two World Wars influenced it, as well. Was this some sort of weird coincidence only that the three leaders of the so-called third way in church policy, Zoltán Túróczy, József Szabó and Imre Veöreös served not only as pastors in the Győr church, but they played leading role together in the magazine *Lelkipásztor*, too?

I think, it is important to get acquainted with Lutheran theology in Hungary in the 1940ies, because in my opinion it had an important effect to the life of the Church in the next decades. It offered contents that went beyond the external growth and the frames that later became too narrow. It tried to bring down taboos with directness that had been made the life of the Church so swampy since a long time. The Lutheran theology in Hungary in that age readily validated international theological streams in a manner that did not shatter the life of such a small Church, rather were able to give impetus to it. It had a positive effect on later decisions affecting church policy.